

From the Land



DEC 23 1997

HARTFORD
CONNECTICUT

Conservancy Commits to 575-Acre Purchase at Robbins Swamp and Canaan Mountain

Purchase will be Largest in Chapter's History

The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter signed an option on September 18 to purchase 575 acres in five tracts at Robbins Swamp and Canaan Mountain in Falls Village. This is the largest single purchase of conservation land possible in the area.

"Signing this option is a real milestone for conservation in Connecticut," said Chapter Executive Director Denise Schlener. "This will be the chapter's largest land purchase to date, and it's at the heart of one of the most biologically significant sites in Connecticut."

Setting aside this land from potential development protects both natural habitat for rare animals and plants and the water quality of Robbins Swamp, Connecticut's largest inland wetland.

The chapter has set a \$1 million fund-raising goal for this property and the nearby Hollenbeck Preserve, which the chapter created in December 1995.

Canaan Mountain and Robbins Swamp are home to a variety of animals and plants listed as endangered, threatened, or of special concern in Connecticut. They include uncommon species of butterflies,

amphibians, trees, flowering plants, grasses, and sedges.

"The water that flows down the steep slopes of Canaan Mountain and through the expanse of Robbins Swamp is obviously a critical component of this very important and unusual ecological system," remarked Lynn Werner, executive director of the Housatonic Valley Association. "The swamp and mountain slopes, in their natural condition, in turn help assure that these waters enter the Housatonic River in a clean, unpolluted state. We are delighted that this major part of the Hollenbeck River watershed is being preserved."

Obtaining this option has particular significance in light of recent events in the immediate area, where large acreages of critical conservation lands have been put on the market. Before this purchase, the

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Robbins Swamp and Canaan Mountain in Falls Village.

WINTER 1997

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Partnerships Public and Private

There was exciting news in Connecticut this summer. Governor Rowland appointed a Blue Ribbon Open Space Task Force to help develop a plan to meet the goal of protecting 10 percent of Connecticut's land through state ownership. For me professionally, as the executive director of The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter, and personally, as an environmentalist, I am heartened by this major step forward in the preservation of land in Connecticut. I was additionally honored to be appointed to the 14-member task force, and pleased that joining me would be Chapter Trustee Diana Atwood Johnson.

The Nature Conservancy is dedicated to marshaling the efforts and resources, both private and public, to preserve land. In the public arena we have been a major force: since 1987 we have been responsible for overseeing the Land Conservation Coalition of Connecticut, which has played a major role in obtaining legislative and gubernatorial support for the Department of Environmental Protection to acquire more than 11,000 acres of open space for more than \$55 million.

Working together, the DEP and the Conservancy have planned and implemented strategies to preserve wildlife habitats through land acquisition on a statewide basis. Our most recent partnership with the DEP was in evidence at our annual meeting when DEP Deputy Commissioner David Leff announced a commitment of \$250,000 toward the recently-optioned Robbins

Swamp and Canaan Mountain properties in the northwest highlands.

The work of the DEP and the Conservancy complement each other well. We are the only two organizations in Connecticut that plan and implement strategies to preserve wildlife habitat through land acquisition on a statewide basis. The Conservancy maintains a focus on habitats for rare or declining plant and

© Michael Marsland



animal species, or exemplary examples of particular natural communities. The DEP, on the other hand, implements programs and preserves land for all our state's species, including those common but beloved inhabitants that represent Connecticut's natural heritage.

Similarly, with recreational lands, the state is the only organization providing a comprehensive range of outdoor recreational opportunities to all of the state's citizens. Groups like the Conservancy and local land trusts open most of their lands to everyone, but only for limited activities, such as hiking, cross-country skiing and canoeing. For the Conservancy or local land trusts to permit swimming, motor boating, hunting and other more intensive uses, would require enormous management costs and staff resources. As a result, we would have to drastically reduce the amount of land we acquire and maintain.

Some municipalities open their lands to a broad range of uses, but only to town residents. Opening their parks to all state residents would overrun most town parks and their staffs. For citizens who cannot afford to join private swimming or fishing clubs, and for all who wish to hike, swim, or fish in different parts of our beautiful and varied state, state parks and forests are essential.

I commend Governor Rowland for focusing attention on the importance of protecting open land in Connecticut. We treasure this land for its beauty and its bounty, for the recreation it can provide, and for the living species that depend upon it. I look forward to working with the governor and others as we strive to meet our mutual goals for the natural areas in this state. 🌿

— DENISE SCHLENER,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY AT WORK

	<i>National</i>	<i>Connecticut</i>
TOTAL TRANSACTIONS:	8,848	666
TOTAL ACRES PROTECTED:	10,235,000	21,005
MEMBERS:	870,210	19,381
CORPORATE ASSOCIATES:	1,980	31

1998 CONVOCAION OF CONNECTICUT LAND TRUSTS

The 1998 Land Trust Convocation will be on Saturday, March 28, 1998 at the Northeast Utilities offices in Berlin. A notice will be sent to all land trust board members as the date approaches. For more information, please call the Land Trust Service Bureau at (860) 344-9867.

\$250,000 DEP Contribution Kicks Off Partnership Agreement with Chapter

Reflecting the statewide ecological importance of the Canaan Mountain/Robbins Swamp area, The Nature Conservancy and the state Department of Environmental Protection have signed a partnership agreement to guide their research, stewardship and land acquisition initiatives at these two abutting sites. As part of the agreement, the two groups announced

DEP's significant participation in the chapter's acquisition of 575 acres in Canaan through the purchase of a conservation easement on the tract from the Conservancy for \$250,000.

DEP Assistant Commissioner David Leff (above) and Chapter Executive Director Denise Schlener announced a memorandum of understanding describing the partnership agreement at the chapter's annual meeting in Falls Village on October 6.

In his announcement, Leff said that when it comes to partnerships, the two organizations are "walking the talk."

"Let me assure you that our agreement is more than mere words on paper," Leff said. "In addition to signing this document, (DEP) is today committing \$250,000 to (the Conservancy's) effort" to purchase the 575-acres at Robbins Swamp and Canaan Mountain.

The partnership on the Conservancy's optioned property also involves other nearby lands. As part of the transaction, the Conservancy will deed three parcels totaling 35 acres next to the DEP's Housatonic State Forest on top of Canaan Mountain to the DEP. The chapter will also purchase

an easement on another 81-acre parcel in Robbins Swamp from the DEP. The agency is purchasing that property with a grant, but needs the additional funds to complete the transaction.

"There is a great deal of land on the market at these two sites, and neither of our organizations would be able to acquire all of it individually," stated Chapter Executive Director Denise Schlener. "Through our partnership, and through cooperation with other groups, we intend to determine which properties are the most critical, which organization is best poised and most appropriate to acquire it, and how the other organization can assist the acquisition."

The memorandum of understanding is also intended to facilitate coordination of individual and joint research projects, trail design, land management and work with the local community. 🌿

— DAVID SUTHERLAND

DEP Saves Adjacent Land

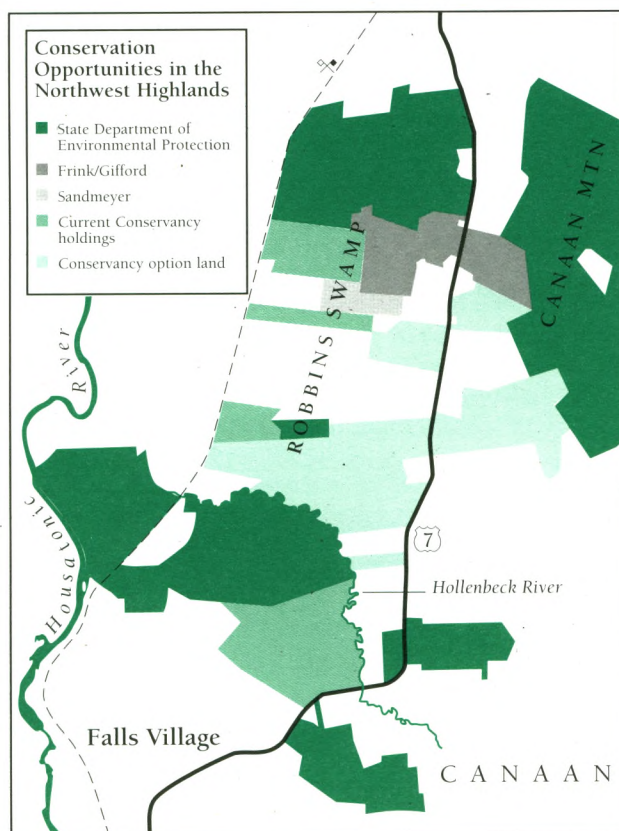
If the patchwork of different properties in Robbins Swamp and on Canaan Mountain can be considered a conservation puzzle, critical pieces were filled in this summer when the Department of Environmental Protection acquired the 172-acre Frink/Gifford tract for \$355,000 and the abutting 37-acre Sandmeyer tract for \$15,000.

Both parcels contain critical acreage in Robbins Swamp, Connecticut's largest inland wetland; and the Frink/Gifford tract also now provides a secure link between the swamp and the Housatonic State Forest on top of Canaan Mountain.

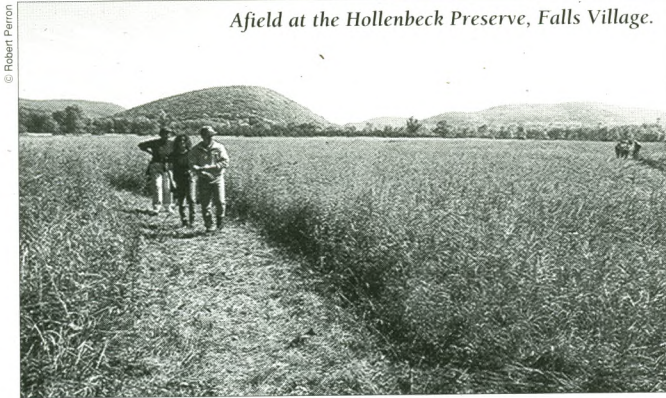
In the swamp, both parcels are bordered on the north by the DEP's Robbins Swamp Wildlife Management Area, and on the west by Nature Conservancy properties. On the steep cliffs ascending 800 feet to the top of Canaan Mountain, the Frink/Gifford parcel abuts the Housatonic State Forest on the north and east, and on the south, part of the 575 acres on which the Conservancy now has an option. The boundary on the north side is formed by a stream that cascades down from Keep Swamp on top of Canaan Mountain in the Housatonic State Forest. Rock ledges jutting into Keep Swamp support a stand of hemlock and white pine trees more than 200 years old.

The Nature Conservancy assisted the DEP in discussions with the owners of these properties over a period of several years concerning their sale, and with state and local officials regarding state funding for the acquisition. 🌿

— DAVID SUTHERLAND



Afield at the Hollenbeck Preserve, Falls Village.



Walk and Learn at Hollenbeck Preserve

The 187-acre Hollenbeck Preserve in Falls Village now has a self-guided tour for visitors.

The series of posted signs are easy to find along the 1.5-mile trail. The text, drawings, maps and diagrams help visitors of all ages enjoy a walk on this preserve by understanding what they are seeing, hearing, feeling and smelling. Visitors will learn about the geologic and natural history of the site, identify some of the plants and animals that live there today, and appreciate the different natural communities as they pass through them on foot.

The chapter thanks summer intern Marina Supple for researching and creating this self-guided tour of one of our important preserves in the northwest corner.

Directions to the Hollenbeck Preserve:

From the East: Take Route 84 West to Route 8 North in Waterbury. From Route 8, take Route 44 in Winsted. Follow Route 44 to Route 7 South in Canaan. Follow 7 South to Falls Village, bearing right on Route 7 when it meets Route 63. Turn right onto Page Road. The preserve is approximately 1/4 mile on the right, across from the recreation center.

From the West: Take Route 84 East to Route 8 North and continue as above.

From the Lakeville area: Take Route 112 East to the junction of Route 7. Take a left onto Route 7 north. Take a left onto Page Road. The preserve is approximately 1/4 mile on the right, across from the recreation center.

From the South/New Milford area: Take Route 7 North to Page Road on the left. The preserve is approximately 1/4 mile on the right, across from the recreation center.

National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Makes \$90,000 Challenge Grant

The chapter has received a \$30,000 challenge grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation toward the Hollenbeck Preserve.

This foundation dedicated to the conservation of natural resources will release these funds when donors match them on a two-to-one basis, bringing the chapter \$90,000 closer to its fundraising goal for this important preserve. The chapter purchased this 182-acre, biologically significant preserve in December 1995. The preserve provides habitat for several

types of rare plants and animals. It will be open to the public for hiking and other educational and recreational activities that do not disturb these species.

The property contains a swamp wooded with a mix of red maple, black ash, white pine and hemlock trees to the north and west and open fields to the south and east. The Hollenbeck River, which defines the east boundary, flows north and then west to the Housatonic River, running through Robbins Swamp, the largest inland wetland in the state. The property is bounded to the south by Page Road and Route 7. State-owned land borders the parcel to the north.

— JOHN MATTHIËSEN

Sunny Valley Buffer Project Award

The Connecticut Chapter's Sunny Valley Preserve received the Farmer/Cooperator of the Year Award from the Litchfield County Soil & Water Conservation District at the district's annual meeting on Oct. 8.

"Water quality is important to us, both as environmentalists and as people who live and work here," said Preserve Director Christopher S. Wood. "We're honored to receive this award, and hope this project will serve as a model for other farms interested in conserving the quality of our water."

The preserve was recognized for its stream buffer project at its main New Milford farm. In the past three years the preserve has developed a 20-foot buffer on each side of the

stream that carries run-off waters from much of the farm. Fenced cattle enclosures reduce erosion from hoof traffic and direct nutrient (manure) dumping from the cattle. Vegetative regrowth increases the filtering of nutrients in field run-off and plant roots stabilize the stream banks. Planting of appropriate wetland species has enhanced the natural regrowth.

District and U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation staff advised on and participated in the planting. U.S.D.A. purchased a conservation easement on a 4.4-acre corridor along the stream bank as part of its Wetland Reserve Program.

— MARGARET MCCAULEY

Left: Volunteers at work on the Sunny Valley water conservation project. Right: The Sunny Valley Preserve's New Milford Farm.



Chapter Purchases Nearly 10 Acres at Pratt & Post Coves

This fall, the Connecticut Chapter increased its holdings at a key site in the Tidelands of the Connecticut River to 12 acres by purchasing parcels at Pratt and Post Coves in Deep River of 6.18 acres and 3.48 acres, respectively.

The chapter is now working to raise \$288,000 to cover the purchase price and closing costs, and to create endowments to care for the properties. The chapter purchased the tracts with internal loans from its land preservation fund. The chapter replenishes this important revolving fund through private donations, keeping it ready for expeditious conservation action in the future.

"Marshes like these are the lifeblood of the Tidelands of the Connecticut River, one of the Last Great Places," said Chapter Executive Director Denise Schlener. "And freshwater tidal marshes are the rarest. This is a conservation victory at a key location."

The chapter bought the Pratt Cove land from Gershon Horowitz and Suzanne M. Haig of Deep River. It is buildable upland with its western edge fronting tidal marsh on Pratt Cove. The tract itself is wooded with mixed deciduous hardwoods.

The chapter bought the Post Cove land from Muriel K. Clough of Essex. It is located on the northwest side of Post Cove. Half of it is wooded with rocky ledge, and half is marsh.

Pratt and Post Coves contain almost 200 adjacent acres of pristine freshwater tidal marsh containing large areas of pickerelweed, arrowleaf, soft-stem bulrush and wild rice. Surrounding these regularly flooded areas are slightly higher natural levees vegetated by cattail, river bulrush and sweet flag. The marshes provide habitat for four aquatic plants listed as species of special concern by the state Department of Environmental

Protection, as well as an exemplary natural community uncommon in the state.

The coves include numerous submerged aquatic plant beds that provide feeding and spawning habitat for fish, including blueback herring, alewife, sea run brown trout, rainbow smelt, white perch and largemouth bass.

Wild rice grows in abundance, attracting many species of migratory waterfowl, including the black duck, the population of which is declining in Connecticut. A 1983 bird survey identified 48 species at the marshes. Two of the state's threatened bird species, Coopers hawk and great egret, both visit the marshes.

Other species of interest found here include wood duck, green heron, great blue heron, marsh wren, Virginia rail, common snipe, belted kingfisher, osprey, muskrat,

deer, snapping turtle, freshwater mussels, and various dragonflies.

In addition to land the Conservancy has purchased, approximately 70 acres at Pratt and Post Coves are listed in the Connecticut Natural Heritage Registry, a joint Nature Conservancy and Department of Environmental Protection program in which landowners agree to contact the Conservancy before selling their property.

The town owns eight acres at Pratt and Post Coves, the Deep River Conservation Trust owns two acres, and DEP owns eight acres.

— JOHN MATTHIESSEN



Although the chapter is blessed with many outstanding volunteers, few match the versatility of Michele Ardolino of Northford.

Michele began volunteering for the chapter early in 1995 when she participated as a monitor at Sandy Point in West Haven during the spring and summer months in our program to protect two threatened species of birds, the least tern and piping plover. In December of the same year, Michele signed up as a volunteer at the Shepaug Dam eagle viewing site in Southbury, where 60 Connecticut Chapter volunteers assist Northeast Utilities staff in providing educational information to visitors each winter from December to mid-March.

Not one to cherry pick the glamour jobs, Michele also rolled up her sleeves in the office, contributing more than 80 hours of volunteer time doing data entry, membership mailings, and other important tasks. Most recently, Michele agreed to fill in temporarily as the science and stewardship team's administrative assistant as a full-time employee for 4 1/2 months. Even though her assignment is complete, she still comes in to the office as a volunteer, cheerfully completing whatever jobs are assigned to her. When not hard at work, Michele and her husband like to mountain bike, roller blade, and watch birds.

It may sound as though the Conservancy rewards volunteers who do hard work only with more work, but that's not always the case. At our annual meeting in October, Michele was one of this year's recipients of the chapter's White Oak Award, with which we recognize outstanding volunteers (see page 9). Small thanks for a mountain of effort, Michele, but our gratitude is sincere!

— ANN COLSON



Pratt Cove in Deep River.

Chapter's Largest Purchase

(continued from page 1)

Conservancy owned 145 acres at Robbins Swamp and 30 acres at Canaan Mountain. The state Department of Environmental Protection and the Weantinoge Heritage Trust have set aside other conservation land in the area.

The chapter is studying options for enhancing public access to the land, which is on both sides of Route 7.

The option is in effect for six months, followed by a six month contract period and two months for the closing. In addition to the purchase agreement the sellers have agreed to grant the Conservancy an easement on 18 acres adjacent to the largest of the five parcels. A conservation easement grants certain rights on a property to the holder of the easement. In this case, the easement will surrender the owner's right to build any new structures on the property or use pesticides on the property; it also requires the use of erosion and sedimentation controls.

The largest of the five tracts to be purchased is 302 acres. More than half this tract is calcareous wetland, which means it has a limestone base. This makes the wetland alkaline, as opposed to acidic, like most New England wetlands. It is therefore an uncommon environment, which is why it hosts a number of rare plants and animals.

The northwestern-most tract is 55.5 acres. The current owners have agreed to remove a dilapidated barn on this property.

The two northern- and southeastern-most tracts, of 53 and 166.5 acres respectively, abut the Housatonic State Forest. Setting aside this land protects the steep west flank of Canaan Mountain from disturbance. Both these tracts contain forest and field. The current owners have agreed to remove a dilapidated house and 17 junk cars and trucks on the southeastern tract. The southwestern-most tract is the smallest, at 16.5 acres. 🌱

— JOHN MATTHIESSEN

Have you ever seen a bald eagle, our threatened national symbol, in the wild? Make this your winter for this inspiring experience! The bald eagle watching program at Northeast Utilities' Shepaug Dam site in Newtown will be open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays, Sundays and Wednesdays, December 27 through March 18. *Reservations are required*; call to make yours from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays, except holidays, at 1-800-368-8951.

Family Nature Walk at Devil's Den.

Sunday, Dec. 14, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
All of nature is preparing for winter.
Leaders: Dorothy Abrams and Jamie Marion.

Nature Photography, Devil's Den

Tuesday, Jan. 6, 8 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
Instructor: Alison Wachstein
The first of a three-part series for adults will take place in the photographer's home studio, with a slide presentation and basic camera instruction on composition, exposure, and lighting for photographing nature and the figure in the landscape. Limited to 20 participants. Beginning photographers welcome. See also Jan. 11 and 20.

Nature Photography, Devil's Den.

Sunday, Jan. 11, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Instructor: Alison Wachstein
In the second of three sessions for adults, this professional photographer will answer camera questions as individuals photograph their subject matter outdoors.

Adult Hike at Devil's Den.

Tuesday, Jan. 13, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Participants can enjoy a short winter hike with Leaders Jacob Baker and Mary Callahan.
No registration required.

Family Nature Walk at Devil's Den.

Sunday, Jan. 18, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Leaders Dorothy Abrams and Carmen Castillo will guide this informative walk.

Nature Photography, Devil's Den

Tuesday, Jan. 20, 8 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
Instructor: Alison Wachstein
During this last session, adults will return to the artist's studio to display the photographs they took at The Den and discuss ways to improve them during a shared, informal, and positive critique.

Rambler to Ambler at Devil's Den.

Sunday, Jan. 25, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
This three-mile moderately strenuous walk will parallel the Saugatuck River and climb some of the more narrow and rugged trails up into Ambler Gorge to view the stream, waterfall, and rocky cliffs that offer wonderful views of The Den.
Leaders: Greg Izzo and Cia and Jamie Marion.

Adult Hike at Devil's Den.

Tuesday, Feb. 3, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
This winter walk will be led by Harvey Franzel and Helene Weatherill. No registration required.

Family Nature Walk at Devil's Den.

Sunday, Feb. 8, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Winter at the preserve is a beautiful and interesting experience. Leaders: Len Horowitz and Jamie Marion.

Den Photography Exhibit.

Monday, Feb. 23 through Friday, March 27.
Photographs of scenes and features at The Den and Katharine Ordway Preserve will be displayed in the Community Room of the Weston Library, 56 Norfield Road, Weston, 203-226-2836, during regular library hours.

Owl Prowl at Devil's Den.

Saturday, March 7, 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
Larry Fischer will begin this walk with a talk on owls. Wear warm clothes and bring binoculars and a flashlight. Minimum age is ten.

Historical Tour of The Den.

Sunday, March 8, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Participants will learn how Devil's Den got its name, how native Americans and colonists adapted to this part of Connecticut, and what evidence they left behind. Leaders: Carolyn Butler, Cia Marion, and Anthony Vaz.

Adult Hike at Devil's Den.

Tuesday, March 10, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
The characteristically different barks of trees and the formation of stone walls are particularly eye-catching at this time of year. Leaders: Jacob Baker and Howard Pierpont. No registration required.

Workday at Devil's Den.

Saturday, March 14, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Volunteers can help get the trails ready for spring, which is right around the corner.

Family Nature Walk at Devil's Den.

Sunday, March 15, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Participants will look for signs of spring with trained Natural History Guides Benjamin Oko and Helene Weatherill.

Pruning Demonstration at Katharine Ordway Preserve.

Saturday, March 21, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Arborist Fred Moore will demonstrate the proper techniques for pruning evergreens, fruit trees, and deciduous trees and shrubs.

For additional information on all above events, please call Devil's Den at (203) 226-4991.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY CONNECTICUT CHAPTER
NINETEEN NINETY-SEVEN ANNUAL REPORT



The
Nature
Conservancy.
CONNECTICUT
CHAPTER

1997 Highlights

The chapter's biggest land protection news this year is at Chapman Pond in East Haddam, where we purchased a 61-acre upland parcel last March.

CONNECTICUT CHAPTER BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Denise Schlener, Executive Director

ON THE COVER:
A BALD EAGLE;
ABOVE: CONNECTICUT'S
NORTHWEST HIGHLANDS
AND MASSACHUSETTS'
SOUTHERN BERKSHIRES;
A KIT FOX, BELOW.



This was the last significant unprotected tract at Chapman Pond, where the chapter first created a preserve in 1982 with a 301-acre purchase in cooperation with the East Haddam Land Trust, the Connecticut River Gateway Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

- At another Tidelands core site, last winter the chapter negotiated the purchase of a critical 3.48-acre parcel at Pratt and Post Coves in Deep River. This pristine marsh provides habitat for a number of state-listed plant species.

- The chapter brought the total acreage of our Burnham Brook Preserve in East Haddam and Salem to 901, through the purchase of 37.7 acres in September and the donation of an 80-acre conservation easement from Marian Bingham in December.

- In Fairfield County, The Den preserve added 26 acres in Redding, bringing its total acreage to 1,746, the largest piece of dedicated conservation land in Fairfield County, and our largest contiguous preserve in the state. This land abuts property of the Redding Land Trust, which contributed \$50,000 toward this bargain purchase. The Den has granted the land trust a conservation easement on the new addition.

- The chapter protected another 5.7 acres on Great Island in Old Lyme thanks to donations of conservation easements from Peter, Timothy, and William Griswold. This brings the chapter's total protected land at Griswold Point and Great Island to 109, including 13 acres in conservation easements.

- The chapter conducted its third straight year of a comprehensive study and control effort of one of the state's most invasive plants, the common reed (*Phragmites australis*) at Chapman Pond. This work, which could have statewide benefits, is taking place in coordination with the state Department of Environmental Protection.

- Statewide, the chapter conducted and funded more than 20 research projects this

field season on a range of subjects. Both last field season and this one, the chapter conducted or funded 12 separate scientific research projects in the Tidelands of the Connecticut River. Research focused on the federally listed shortnose sturgeon, the globally rare Puritan tiger beetle, invasive plant species and site conservation planning.

- In an effort to share some of the results of this research, the chapter conducted its first Tidelands symposium at Wesleyan University last fall, in cooperation with the Connecticut River Watershed Council and Wesleyan. The symposium provided an opportunity for conservationists to increase their understanding of the Tidelands area. Support for the symposium was also provided by Northeast Utilities and the Silvio Conte National Fish & Wildlife Refuge.

- Last Earth Day, United Technologies announced a two-year, \$250,000 grant for land protection in the Tidelands of the Connecticut River region. In addition to that very generous financial support, UTC sent 16 volunteers to our Great Pond Preserve in Glastonbury that day to help prepare for the preserve's official opening on June 14.

- Northeast Utilities donated a four-wheel drive Chevrolet Suburban truck to us last May, after taking the truck out of service, reconditioning the engine and repainting it. This is a vital tool, especially for our stewardship program, which is responsible for maintaining our 57 preserves across the state. Northeast Utilities also very kindly hosted our Land Trust Service Bureau convocation for the third time at their Berlin offices, and has offered to do so again this March.

- Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward made a \$500,000 commitment to the chapter. Paul Newman donates 100 percent of his after-tax profits from the Westport-based Newman's Own food company to charity. Joanne Woodward chairs the chapter's capital fund-raising effort.

The Connecticut Chapter of The Nature Conservancy 1997 Financial Summary

For the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1997

	Fiscal Year 1997	Fiscal Year 1996
SUPPORT AND REVENUE		
Membership dues*	\$383,296	\$445,848
Individual contributions and bequests	\$983,927	\$696,091
Corporate contributions	\$421,622	\$321,782
Foundation contributions	\$377,305	\$298,196
Other contributions	\$39,027	\$92,014
Gifts of land	\$556,985	\$1,449,621
Federal and state grants	\$34,767	\$54,081
Investment income**	\$2,356,121	\$1,258,514
Other (leases, royalties, fees, merchandising, tradeland sales)	\$111,812	\$159,888
Total Support & Revenue Before Sale of Conservation Lands	\$5,264,862	\$4,776,035
Sale of land to government partners and other conservation agencies	\$55,150	\$0
TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE	\$5,320,012	\$4,776,035
EXPENSES AND CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS		
Additions of conservation land	\$1,165,152	\$1,698,400
Net amounts added to permanent capital—endowments and land preservation fund**	\$2,152,632	\$789,113
Conservation programs	\$1,232,730	\$1,343,368
Internal transfers (net)	\$9,200	\$1,276
Cost of land or easements sold to government partners and other conservation agencies***	\$55,150	\$0
Value of land contributed to government partners and other conservation agencies	\$104,393	\$0
Total Program Expenses and Capital Allocations	\$4,719,257	\$3,832,157
General and Administrative	\$319,442	\$364,448
Fundraising	\$521,324	\$449,745
Total Administration and Fundraising	\$840,766	\$814,193
TOTAL EXPENSES AND CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS	\$5,560,023	\$4,646,350
NET RESULT Support and Revenue over Expenses and Capital Allocations	(\$240,011)	\$129,685
EXPENSES/CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL		
Total Program Expenses and Capital Allocations	85%	82%
General and Administrative	6%	8%
Fundraising	9%	10%
ASSET, LIABILITY & FUND BALANCE SUMMARY		
Book value of conservation land****		
Preserves owned in fee (12,317 acres)	\$21,276,108	\$20,290,956
Easements (1,701 acres)	\$3,873,138	\$3,693,138
Endowments and land preservation fund**	\$16,577,397	\$14,424,766
Cash balances in operating and land funds	\$1,037,275	\$626,992
Notes and grants receivable	(\$1,213)	(\$2,196)
Buildings and equipment net of depreciation	\$416,192	\$447,708
Other assets	\$13,657	\$17,188
Total Assets	\$43,192,554	\$39,498,552
Total loans for land purchases	\$1,324,295	\$681,105
Other liabilities	\$9,289	\$4,164
Total Liabilities	\$1,333,584	\$685,269
Total Fund Balances (Net Worth)	\$41,858,970	\$38,813,283
Total Liabilities and Fund Balances	\$43,192,554	\$39,498,552

Footnotes:

The Nature Conservancy is audited as one financial entity, including all state offices; hence Connecticut Chapter statements have not been audited separately.

The above statement represents cash and land only, and does not include pledges or planned gifts.

* In last year's financial report, transfer to the Connecticut Chapter from Home Office of a portion of dues income was included under "membership dues." In this year's report, for both fiscal years 1997 and 1996, that amount (\$67,092) has been moved under "internal transfers (net)."

** Endowment balances have been adjusted for both fiscal 1997 and 1996 to include unrealized gains and thus are reported here at market value.

*** This amount includes only the actual purchase price of land sold. It does not include direct acquisition costs such as surveys, appraisals, and taxes related to the acquisition of these properties. Such costs are recorded as conservation program expenses. In fiscal 1997, there were two sales of easements: one to the Redding Land Trust (\$50,000) at Devil's Den and one to the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (\$5,150) at Sunny Valley.

**** Land is booked at the lower of cost or market value.



1996 Chapter Donors

This annual report is intended to give members and supporters of The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter an overview of the past year's progress, to report our fiscal position, and to thank you all for making this progress possible. The following pages contain lists of those who contributed \$100 or more during fiscal year 1996: July 1, 1995 to June 30, 1996.

We would have liked to have listed all of our donors and members, but the cost would have been prohibitive. Please know that we are deeply grateful for every contribution to our work.

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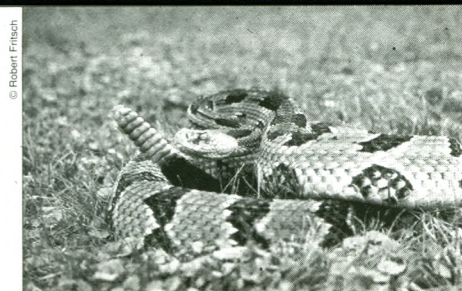
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Stanley C. Steckler
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Joyce Werden & Paul Shaffer
Doris E. Whitbeck
Norris & Dorothea Whitbeck
Sarah Jessica Whitson
Mrs. Grafton Wiggins
Mrs. Christopher Young
Alice Zea

Memorial Gifts

In the past year, The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter received generous memorial contributions in the names of the following people. The trustees and staff of the chapter wish to thank the families and loved ones of these people for including the Conservancy in their lives at this time. A memorial gift that furthers our conservation work is one that can be cherished and valued for generations.

Margaret Lydia Ables
Brooks Allen
Ruth Yung Anderson
Mary Lee Barlow
Helen Barnhill
Louis Bayer
Vivian Berns
Richard Bishop
Oscar Boos
Richard Brose
Myrtle Doris Christianson
Paul C. Clark
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Samuel F. Cote
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Joan DeWind
Dr. S. Carlton Dickerman
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Laurel Franklin
Richard Gaetjen
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Ruth Hopwood Sayres
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Fred Irwin
Wilbur Johnson
Hal Kneen
Lester Leu
Nancy Mason
John McSweeney
Charles Niblack
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Muriel Evans Reisner
Joseph Ricci
Virginia E. Robinson
Helen Rockett
George Scheer
Ann H. Shellenberger
Elizabeth Schultz
Joan Seeholzer
Barbara Spooner
Lucy Sprague
Peter M. Stern
Stan D. Tomaszewski
Lotte G. Tschinkle
David Wilson
William J. Wolfe
Robert Yarrow

Honorary Gifts

In the past year, the chapter has received generous donations in honor of the following people:

Carol Altieri
David Blimes
Mr. & Mrs. V.W. Cooke
Leslie N. Corey Jr.
The Florio Family
Sheldon Geel
Charles A. Griswold
Edward L. Griswold
John S. Griswold Jr.
The Kruger Family
Lydia Pan & Mark Kronenberg
Mrs. Thomas J. Lamotte
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Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Stowe
Frances Vitacco & Steve Zappalla
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Corporations who make contributions of \$1,000 or more for chapter operations.

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A Legacy of Research

By Elizabeth Farnsworth, Sara Colangelo* and Katharine Sands*

A little more than four decades ago, a group of scientists looked hard at their data collected from years of field studies, and concluded that the habitats they were studying cried out for conservation. Those concerned and visionary scientists founded The Nature Conservancy.

In the ensuing years, data and models garnered from the organization's research have consistently informed its development of sound conservation strategies. The Connecticut Chapter has one of the strongest and broadest scientific research legacies in the country. With our wealth of sites and diversity of species; dozens of research



partners in academe, government and the private sector; and legions of interns and volunteer assistants, the Connecticut Chapter has conducted more than 280 systematic studies at preserves across the state.

Recently, we had the opportunity to review this monumental collection of research. We now have in hand a comprehensive, organized profile of more than 30 years of scientific initiatives sponsored by the chapter. This compilation allows us to appreciate how much we already know; to show how data have influenced management decisions; to assemble baseline historical information we can compare to contemporary data; and to identify priorities for future research. We can also distill and disseminate useful data to appropriate partners.

The scientific studies conducted on Connecticut preserves vary widely in format. Some forays (like rapid species inventories) take a week or less to complete (24 percent), while most projects last from one month to a year (57 percent), or cover multiple years (7 percent). Since field research is an inherently collaborative process, fully half the projects have involved two or more people with a range of expertise. It's no surprise that the majority (62 percent) of our studies take place during the warm months from May through September, but many intrepid ecologists venture out to track species throughout the year. Our survey also shows that research intensity has fluctuated over the decades. The late 1970s, for example, saw a flurry of activity (66 studies conducted). The recent growth of our small grants program and our educational outreach has fostered a marked increase in

science projects undertaken at chapter sites since 1993; this year alone, we fund or provide field sites for around 20 studies.

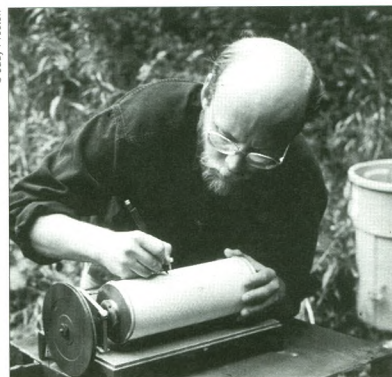
What do all these scientists study? Almost 80 percent of our field reconnaissance entails inventorying the richness of species at sites the chapter protects. An exhaustive inventory describes the geology, soils, and hydrology of the habitat, and enumerates the plants and animals that live within it. For example, students of the Yale School of Forestry completed such an integrated study of the species-rich Mount Riga Plateau in northwestern Connecticut. There is no substitute for walking the land with an acute naturalist's eye, but in recent years our tools for delineating and mapping natural communities have grown more sophisticated and can encompass larger scales. The advent of geographic information systems (GIS) enabled Dr. Nels Barrett of the Cape Cod National Seashore and Ken Metzler of the Connecticut Natural Diversity Database to produce detailed maps of wetlands surrounding Mudge Pond in Salisbury. GIS also permitted Dr. Juliana Barrett, former Geoffrey C. Hughes Director of the Tidelands of the Connecticut River Program, and colleagues to depict submerged aquatic vegetation of the lower Connecticut River.

Multi-year studies allow us to track changes in natural communities and animal populations over time. Long-term censuses have been especially useful for documenting the movements and demographics of species (for example, songbirds—see accompanying article on Devil's Den) and for tracking the health of ecosystems. Over the past 25 years, Dr. Richard Goodwin, professor emeritus of botany at Connecticut College in New London and one of the chapter's founders, has fostered myriad student projects focusing on vertebrates, butterflies, fish, flora, forest community structure and successional change at Burnham Brook Preserve.

Many scientific studies help us trace the natural and anthropogenic agents of change in natural communities, and we must know the

(continued on page 11)

© Judy Preston



*Please see the White Oak Awards, page 9.

Writer, Gardener, Conservationist, Philanthropist

Joan Lee Faust studied botany and plant genetics in college, aspiring to follow in the footsteps of the renowned horticulturist and be "a female Luther Burbank." Fortunately for her many fans she also studied journalism, and began writing about gardening, soon becoming *The New York Times*' garden editor—a position she held for 35 years—along the way also writing seven gardening books. Now a free-lance contributor, she writes a weekly column for the *Times*' four Sunday regional editions.

Joan never repeats a subject. Her inspiration "just comes." One day while weeding, a frog leapt out from beneath a sheltering hosta. Presto! A story on frogs in the garden. An avid birder, she once wrote a column on birds she observed at her backyard feeders.

A Conservancy member since 1964, Joan said it is "one of my favorite conservation organizations." Deeply drawn to the concept of saving open space, Joan appreciates the Conservancy's policy of retaining a reverter clause when it "turns over to local conservation groups" land it cannot manage itself. And she admires the lead role the organization has taken nationally in tackling the issue of invasive species. "People don't appreciate how aggressive plants can be," Joan said, "And their ability to completely take over," threatening natural diversity.

Joan's support for the Conservancy extends beyond words. She has stood watch as a piping plover volunteer, packed stones into rubber tires on Falkner's Island to create nesting habitat for roseate terns, and contributed to the acquisition of Burnham Brook, Chapman Pond and Selden Creek preserves. And recently, she made a planned gift through the Conservancy's Long Term Income Fund (a pooled income fund), in addition designating the chapter as beneficiary of her individual retirement account.

Joan's commitment to environmental education undergirds her support of conservation organizations, be it as volunteer gardener at the Bartlett Arboretum in Stamford or as program chair for the Connecticut Botanical Society. "Education, such as Sunny Valley's Open Farm Day, is one of the strongest ways to get the word out to young people," Joan said. "More parents should sensitize their kids by turning off the TV and getting them out to the woods." Single handedly, Joan has already contributed more than her share toward ensuring that there will always be woods to explore. 🌿

— CAROL KIMBALL



© Carol Kimball

Annual Meeting Celebrates

Take a perfect fall day in northwest Connecticut; add 125 few awards, reports, and thanks for jobs well done; flavor you have the Connecticut Chapter's 37th annual meeting,

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

NEW TRUSTEES

Elected by the board for a one-year term:

HENRY D. LORD, New Haven

In 1973 Henry Lord became involved with the chapter as a volunteer, including inspecting and monitoring chapter easement sites, and in 1976 received a White Oak Award. He attended Yale and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, majoring in political science, and is enrolled in the graduate program in Urban Studies at Southern Connecticut State University. From 1988 to 1992 he was Public Policy Coordinator for the Population Institute, which advocates U.S. assistance in international family planning programs. He volunteered as district coordinator for AmeriCares homefront, a housing rehabilitation organization in greater New Haven. He serves on the boards of the New Haven Preservation Trust and the Creative Arts Workshop in New Haven.

Elected by the membership for a three-year term:

JOHN E. SILLIMAN, West Hartford

John Silliman's thumbnail biography appeared in our last issue.

Elected by the board for one year as officers:

ANTHONY P. GRASSI, Wilton, Chair

AUSTIN D. BARNEY II, West Simsbury, Vice Chair, Development

DANIEL P. BROWN JR., West Granby, Vice Chair, Land Acquisition

DR. KENT E. HOLSINGER, Hartford, Vice Chair, Stewardship

MARY M. ACKERLY, Norfolk, Secretary

EUNICE S. GROARK, Hartford, Treasurer

Re-elected by the membership for three-year terms:

RONALD W. JEITZ, Weston

DIANA ATWOOD JOHNSON, Old Lyme

JOHN A. MILLINGTON, Washington Depot



White Oak Award Recipients, left to right: Back row: Award-recipient Philip T. Ashton, Chairman Anthony P. Grassi. Middle row: Volunteer Coordinator Ann Colson, award recipients Jennifer R. McCann, Michele Ardolino, Laurie J. Hoyt, Cia Marion, Executive Director Denise Schlener. Front row, accepting awards on behalf of absent recipients, Stewardship Ecologist Dr. Elizabeth Farnsworth, Director of Science & Stewardship Judy Preston.

Chapter's Thirty-Seventh Year

enthusiastic chapter members, trustees, volunteers, and staff; stir in a with box lunches and top off with some exhilarating field trips, and which we held October 4 at the Hollenbeck Preserve in Falls Village.



The chapter thanks keynote speaker Dr. Deborah Jensen, the Conservancy's vice president for conservation science, who spoke on the subject of conservation planning.

AWARDS

The chapter recognized the following departing board members for their contributions to the chapter.

PETER B. COOPER of Bethany, 21 years on the board, including seven terms as chairman.

EVAN S. GRISWOLD of Old Lyme, 10 years on the board, including six terms as vice-chair for science and stewardship.

PATRICIA L. MALCOLM of Greenwich, 5 years on the board.

J. WYATT UHLEIN of Litchfield, 4 years on the board, including two terms as treasurer.

WHITE OAK AWARD RECIPIENTS

Presented annually to volunteers who have made outstanding contributions to the chapter.

MICHELE ARDOLINO of Northford

This award is presented in appreciation of your outstanding service to the chapter's membership and development efforts, and for your invaluable contributions of time and leadership to our volunteer bald eagle program at Shepaug Dam in Southbury.

PHILIP T. ASHTON of Meriden

This award is presented in recognition of your dedication to the environment and your tireless efforts to engage Connecticut businesses and corporations in the work of The Nature Conservancy. Your energy, creativity and commitment are greatly appreciated.

SARA COLANGELO of North Haven

This award is presented in appreciation of the exemplary job you did, in cooperation with Katharine Sands, to produce a comprehensive summary of more than 30 years of scientific research at the Connecticut Chapter. Your clear writing and cheerful enthusiasm have been invaluable to the project, and greatly appreciated around the office.

JOCELYN A. FORBUSH of Hamden

This award is presented in appreciation of your contribution to advancing an ecological understanding of the natural communities in Connecticut through able management and analysis of vegetation data.

LAURIE J. HOYT of Hadlyme

This award is presented in recognition of your dedication and loyalty to the Connecticut Chapter, your ongoing assistance with membership projects, and your outstanding stewardship efforts at Selden Creek Preserve. We are especially grateful for your tireless work on the kiosk project at Selden, which will be appreciated by all who visit there.

CIA MARION of Westport

This award is presented in recognition of your multi-faceted volunteer work on behalf of The Nature Conservancy's Devil's Den and Katharine Ordway preserves; your dependable, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic leadership as a program guide for educational programs and hikes; your contribution to workday and stewardship projects; and for your participation in the 1997 MAPS bird-banding program.

JENNIFER R. McCANN of Old Saybrook

This award is presented in appreciation of your contribution to advancing an ecological understanding of the natural communities in Connecticut through able management and analysis of vegetation data.

KATHARINE SANDS of Farmington

This award is presented in appreciation of your excellent summary, produced in cooperation with Sara Colangelo, of scientific research completed at the Connecticut Chapter. Your sense of humor, Minesweeper skills and fabulous energy have been a real boon to the project.

SUSAN G. TOBIAS of East Hampton

This award is presented in appreciation of your contribution to advancing an ecological understanding of the natural communities in Connecticut through able management and analysis of vegetation data.

FINANCIAL REPORT

As of June 30, 1997, the balance in cash and securities in accounts managed by the Connecticut Chapter totals \$16.5 million. Of that total \$8.1 million is in permanent endowments, where its principal will remain untouched, \$2.44 million is in our Land Preservation Fund, and \$6 million is in operating and capital reserve endowments, whose principal can be used if needed. Land and operating centers have net cash deficits totalling \$98,000.

The chapter's total fund balance, or net worth, including conservation land assets, increased by \$3 million in fiscal 1997, to almost \$42 million. Land assets are booked at fair-market value at the time of acquisition, and are not updated thereafter.

In our \$2 million fiscal 1997 operating budget, the year-end balance was a surplus \$98,000. For land projects and endowments, both in Connecticut and out-of-state, including the Latin America Program, Connecticut Chapter members contributed over \$5 million in the last year. This included cash gifts, bequests, pledges, land gifts, and deferred gifts. Of this total, almost \$2.3 million was for use in Connecticut.

The chapter is in good financial health, yet the urgency of our mission continues to push us to venture beyond the comfortable and take risks to meet critical conservation priorities. We are under contract or in negotiations for properties worth over \$5.2 million. Among these are some of the most ecologically significant natural areas left in the state of Connecticut. Your continued strong support, as ever, will be critical to our success.

Any member who wishes is welcome to come to the chapter's office in Middletown to review our accounting records.

The chapter would like to extend special thanks to those whose volunteer efforts helped make our annual meeting a success, including:

- Ellery Sinclair, for mowing the Hollenbeck Preserve.
- Canaan First Selectman Peter Lawson and the town of Canaan for allowing us to use the parking lot of the recreation center.
- Lee Collins, Henrietta and Walter Horvay, and Rusty Riva of the Southern Berkshire Amateur Radio Club for providing emergency radio contact on our field trips.

SAVE THE EARTH — SAVE ON TAXES

Here are some creative ideas for year-end giving:

Make a Gift with Cash.

A cash gift is the easiest way to help protect threatened habitat. If you itemize, such outright gifts are fully deductible up to 50 percent of your adjusted gross income. Any excess charitable deductions from cash or other types of gifts can be used in five future tax years.

Take Stock in Conservation

Have you enjoyed significant growth in your stock portfolio? Now is the time to leverage that appreciation with a gift to the Conservancy. A gift of publicly traded securities, such as stocks, bonds, or mutual funds could cost you less than an equal gift of cash. An outright gift of securities held long-term qualifies for an income tax deduction for the full market value up to 30 percent of your adjusted gross income.

Turn Your Real Estate into Wildlife Habitat

Real estate, such as a vacation home, farm, or commercial property that has appreciated in value can also be a good alternative gift to cash. The Conservancy will sell the property and use the proceeds to help protect natural areas for wildlife. Like gifts of securities, real estate gifts also qualify for a charitable income tax deduction of the full value up to 30 percent of your adjusted gross income.

Check Out Our Life Income Programs

Want to make a gift, but reluctant to give up an income-producing asset? Our planned gifts may offer more income than you are currently receiving. If you're older than 50, you can make a gift to the Conservancy with cash, securities, or real estate that will pay you and another beneficiary income for life. Gift minimums are \$5,000 for cash or securities, and \$100,000 for real estate.

Include The Nature Conservancy in Your Will

When remembering family and friends, consider the Conservancy as well. A gift through your will, retirement plan, or living trust will help protect vanishing wilderness for future generations to enjoy. Any bequest to the Conservancy also qualifies for an estate tax deduction. For more information please call Carol Kimball, Planned Giving Officer, at the Connecticut Chapter office at (860) 344-0716. The Nature Conservancy cannot render tax or legal advice, and this information is not intended as such. We recommend that you work with a qualified financial advisor in order to take full advantage of tax benefits, especially in light of the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997, which includes changes to capital gains taxes. Our office will be happy to work with you and your advisor.

Northeast Utilities Donates Water Testing

During the summer, Northeast Utilities conducted water quality monitoring of samples taken at key sites in the Tidelands of the Connecticut River.

The team consisted of Tom Ashley, chemistry specialist at Northeast Utility's Millstone Point facility, who oversaw the program, and Keith Domijan and Candy Carignan, students at Three Rivers Community Technical College in Norwich, who were summer interns at Northeast Utilities. The group collected water samples and conducted most of the laboratory analysis. Northeast Utilities also provided equipment and supplies for the project.

The Connecticut Chapter launched the Tidelands water monitoring program in 1996 to develop site-specific information at several core sites. While water quality on the main stem of the Connecticut River has been monitored for many years by a number of organizations, only limited information is available on tributaries discharging into core sites. Land use activity in the watersheds of these tributaries, particularly excessive fertilizer use, improperly functioning septic systems, increasing amounts of impervious surfaces and activities conducive to erosion may affect water quality in the core sites.

The specifics of the 1997 program were similar to the 1996 program with a few modifications. Sampling was conducted at seven locations within four core sites: Salmon Cove, Whalebone Creek, Hamburg Cove and Pratt and Post Coves. For the Salmon Cove and Whalebone Creek sites, the Moodus River and Roaring Brook, respectively, were added as second sampling locations to supplement monitoring conducted in the Salmon River and Whalebone Creek. Conservancy members Charles and Dawne

Scarlott, who have registered their land with the Connecticut Natural Heritage Registry, again permitted the use of their property as a sampling location this year.



Above: Candy Carignan (left) and Keith Domijan collect water samples.

Sampling was conducted weekly from the end of June through August. In addition, the team took samples immediately after a storm in August to evaluate the effect of storm water runoff on water quality. The samples were analyzed for a number of physical, chemical and biological parameters, including acidity, total suspended solids, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, biochemical oxygen demand, total phosphorus, nitrate and fecal coliform.

When complete laboratory results for the 1997 program are available, we will be able to build on the information developed last year. We hope to continue this program in 1998, which will enable us to validate the initial baseline data and to compare year-to-year results.

Our sincere thanks to Northeast Utilities and particularly to the sampling team for their significant effort in undertaking this program for the chapter in 1997. 🌿

— BILL WILLIAMS

A Legacy of Research

(continued from page 7)

causes of change before we can devise stewardship strategies. For example, researchers have quantified impacts of invasive species such as the common reed (*Phragmites australis*) on wetlands communities, nutrient loading by geese and beaver on bogs, and storm damage to Beckley Bog in Norfolk and Cathedral Pines in Cornwall.

Because the chapter has dozens of preserves, we can offer many research sites for broad comparative studies on a range of topics. Researchers have assayed and compared water quality at several Tidelands sites, for example, and followed populations of the rare bog turtle (*Clemmys muhlenbergii*) at five preserves. Using novel molecular techniques, several groups are now comparing the genetic structure of multiple populations of rare plants in order to better understand biological reasons for their rarity.

Most Conservancy-sponsored science

focuses on specific questions related to conservation of rare species and communities; namely, why are they rare? How can we best protect them? How do we know when we have achieved success? In many cases, data from these studies directly influence our stewardship strategies; for example, we can document that carefully trimming vegetation creates habitat for rare tiger beetles and enhances their rates of population growth. Sometimes research confirms the complexity of ecological systems, and points to the need for more investigation (studies on *Phragmites* reveal compelling questions about its implications for bird and insect species richness). Simultaneously, these studies provide a wealth of data that inform broader theory, aid other chapters and partners, and teach us much about the biological wonders that The Nature Conservancy was founded to safeguard. We encourage a new generation of naturalists to contribute to this growing scientific legacy. 🌿



Den Research Focuses on Birds

Since 1991, Drs. Lise Hanners and Steve Patton, ornithologists and directors of the chapter's Devil's Den Preserve, have been overseeing three ambitious bird-studies, which document population dynamics and breeding behavior of many avian inhabitants of Connecticut's forests. They include:

- ... a long-term study of population dynamics, breeding, and recruitment of the worm-eating warbler. A better understanding of this and other denizens of woodland interiors will inform management strategies to protect them.

- ... annual surveys of the bird diversity at The Den to be compared with other large forests in Connecticut, underway since 1992.

- ... a bird-banding program undertaken in cooperation with the national MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) project of the Institute for Bird Populations in California. A cadre of volunteers helps band birds every 10 days throughout the breeding season, and contribute to an important, growing national database on bird populations.

Together, these studies provide data the Conservancy can use throughout the state and nationally to keep a close watch on trends in bird numbers, significant indicators of ecological integrity at regional and global scales. 🌿

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

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From the Land

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McKinney Refuge Habitat Restoration at Milford Point

In the Spring 1996 issue, we reported on a habitat restoration project at Milford Point funded in part by the chapter. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service owns the area as part of the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge. With the assistance of the Conservancy, the Fish & Wildlife service studied the site for potential restoration of nesting habitat for the federally threatened piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) and state threatened least tern (*Sterna antillarum*), and we are happy to report on the project's success!

The service began its work by restoring sand dunes degraded by the deposition of spoils from past dredging efforts in the Housatonic River. Following the model of nearby Long Beach in Stratford, which is a prime nesting area for the two bird species, the USFWS set about reconstructing a "natural" barrier beach.

The service completed the dune restoration work in January of 1997, having reconfigured 3.5 acres. They also removed non-native invasive species and graded on-site dredge spoils to create open dunes similar to Long Beach. Wind and storms have deposited sand naturally, and planting of native beach grass and shrubs is stabilizing the area. Although

the service has a plan to monitor the progress of vegetation in this area, the best measure of success came this spring and summer.

Two nesting pairs of piping plovers used the newly restored site, as did 26 pairs of least terns and one pair of American oystercatchers.

Although one plover pair lost its nest to predation, the second pair fledged three birds. The terns fledged 12 young, and the oystercatchers fledged two. This was the first use of the refuge for nesting by piping plovers since 1983.

"Already, our Milford Point project has been used many times as an example of how effective partnerships and habitat restoration can be," said McKinney Refuge Manager Bill Kolodnicki.



Milford Point in Milford, part of the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge.

"The great thing about the success of the Milford Point project," said chapter Director of Science & Stewardship Judy Preston "is that it not only represents success for Milford Point, but for other coastal lands where similar restoration may be appropriate."

This project was funded by the chapter's Tidal Wetlands Research Program.

— DAVID GUMBART

Farewell to Suzanne and Marian!

The Connecticut Chapter bid farewell to two departing staff members last summer. Science & Stewardship Administrative Assistant Suzanne Burns (above) joined our staff last year, and had also worked for the Conservancy in Maryland. Associate Director of Development for Annual Giving Marian Moore, who oversaw the chapter's Corporate Associate program and Charter Oak Council, joined the chapter in 1994. Good luck, friends!



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